Hilkje C. Hänel, Fabian Schuppert (eds.), *Understanding Social Struggles. Relating Recognition Theories and Epistemic Injustice*, (Philosophy – Enlightenment – Critique, vol. 13), transcript Verlag, Bielefeld, 2026, 214 pp.

The collective volume *Understanding Social Struggles* situates itself within contemporary philosophical debates concerning the relationship between recognition, injustice, and moral responsibility. It proposes a systematic articulation between theories of recognition and theories of epistemic injustice, starting from the premise that many current social conflicts cannot be adequately understood solely in juridical or economic terms. Rather, they require an ethical analysis of the ways in which persons are recognized – or misrecognized – as moral and epistemic subjects. From this perspective, the volume advances a significant shift in emphasis, from injustice conceived as the violation of norms to injustice understood as an injury to dignity through misrecognition.

One of the central contributions of the volume consists in redefining epistemic injustice as a form of moral misrecognition. As emphasized in the introduction by Hilkje C. Hänel and Fabian Schuppert (pp. 7-26), to be epistemically wronged does not merely involve a cognitive malfunction, but rather constitutes an infringement upon the normative status of the person within social relations. Epistemic recognition necessarily entails an ethical dimension, insofar as it presupposes the attribution of credibility, respect, and symbolic authority within social practices of knowledge.

This thesis is developed from multiple perspectives throughout the volume. Jacob Blumenfeld's contribution (pp. 49-64), for instance, interprets social class as a form of "moral injury", emphasizing the structural character of misrecognition. He argues that certain forms of dignity degradation cannot be remedied through symbolic strategies of recognition alone, since they are embedded in the very mechanisms of social order. From an ethical standpoint, this analysis draws attention to the limits of recognition politics and to the risk of conflating justice with purely declarative gestures.

A complementary direction is offered by the analysis of the educational sphere, where epistemic injustice manifests not only through cultural marginalization, but also through institutional positioning that undermines individuals' capacity to assume intellectual responsibility (see especially the study by Peimaneh Yaghoobifarah, pp. 141-182). Treating students or particular social groups as "epistemically incompetent" has profound ethical consequences, as it affects both the formation of conscience and the individual's relation to truth. From this perspective, education emerges as a privileged site of either recognition or misrecognition of the person, with direct implications for moral maturation.

Karen Ng's contribution (pp. 183-198) extends the concept of recognition beyond strictly interhuman relations, proposing a reflection on the ethical dimension of our relation to life as such. This opening toward an ethics of relationality with living beings introduces a perspective that, while remaining within a philosophical register, may fruitfully enter into dialogue with the theology of creation and with contemporary reflections on responsibility toward the world.

A particularly relevant chapter for the present context is devoted to artificial intelligence and structural epistemic injustice. Fabian Schuppert (pp. 199-212) examines how algorithmic systems for language processing – especially *large language models* – do not function as purely technical or neutral tools, but are embedded in social and cultural contexts already shaped by hierarchies of recognition. He shows that such systems tend to reproduce and even amplify pre-existing "regimes of recognition", insofar as they are trained on textual corpora that reflect normative selections regarding what counts as legitimate knowledge, acceptable discourse, or rational argumentation.

Under the appearance of technological objectivity, algorithms may thus conceal subtle mechanisms of symbolic exclusion, marginalizing certain voices, modes of expression, or alternative forms of knowledge. From this standpoint, artificial intelligence does not merely mediate access to information, but actively participates in shaping the epistemic space, influencing criteria of credibility and authority. The fundamental issue raised by Schuppert is an ethical one: delegating the evaluation of

knowledge to opaque and difficult-to-contest systems risks weakening human moral responsibility and eroding communities' capacity for critical discernment. In the absence of explicit normative reflection, technology may become a vector of structural epistemic injustice, reinforcing power asymmetries in the form of seemingly neutral and automated decisions.

In conclusion, the volume offers a coherent conceptual framework for understanding the moral dimension of contemporary social conflicts, proposing a reading of injustice as the misrecognition of persons in their epistemic and moral status. Although the volume does not explicitly operate with a theological foundation of dignity, its analysis of recognition, vulnerability, and intersubjective responsibility opens a meaningful space for dialogue with theological ethics and anthropology. Through its argumentative rigor and the diversity of perspectives it brings together, the work establishes itself as a significant contribution to current ethical reflection and as a valuable resource for critically deepening the relationship between knowledge, dignity, and social life.

Assoc. Prof. Ciprian Iulian Toroczkai, Ph.D.